

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 HA-05 EUR-12 MCT-01 /099 W
-----009363 140220Z /61

P R 131725Z JUL 78
FM USINT HAVANA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2511
INFO USMISSION USUN NY

C O N F I D E N T I A L HAVANA 2003

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV PORG CU RQ UNGA
SUBJ: CUBAN POSITION ON PUERTO RICO
REF: A. STATE 166231; B. HAVANA 1819; C. HAVANA 1684, D. STATE
151050

1. SUMMARY: WHILE WE HAVE DOUBTS THAT CUBANS WILL EVER CEASE
ADVOCACY OF PUERTO RICAN INDEPENDENCE, THERE MAY BE A WAY TO
AFFECT OR INFLUENCE THEIR UN POSTURE. END SUMMARY.

2. USINT IS CAUTIOUS ABOUT VERACITY OF CASTRO'S STATEMENT TO
US MAYORS (REF B) THAT HE WOULD "ACCEPCT ANY STATUS CHOSEN BY
PUERTO RICAN PEOPLE". FOR ONE THING, CASTRO'S REMARKS WERE
MADE TO MAYORS IN SEPARATE ROOM AT PROTOCOL HOUSE AND THEN
RELAYED BY MAYORS TO ACTING USINT CHIEF. WE HAVE LESS THAN FULL
CONFIDENCE IN MAYORS' REPORTING ACCURACY.

3. SECONDLY, EVEN IF CASTRO DID MAKE STATEMENT, "ACCEPTANCE" OF
STATUS CHOSEN BY PUERTO RICAN PEOPLE DOES NOT NECESSARILY IMPLY
THAT HAVANA WOULD SUBSEQUENTLY CEASE ADVOCACY OF PUERTO RICAN
INDEPENDENCE. EVEN NOW CUBANS "ACCEPT" CURRENT PUERTO
RICAN POLITICAL STATUS - THEY RECOGNIZE US AUTHORITY
OVER ISLAND AND APPLY TO US FOR VISAS AND FLIGHT CLEAR-
ANCES. YET THEY CONTINUE TO ADVOCATE INDEPENDENCE.
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4. CUBAN SUPPORT FOR PUERTO RICAN INDEPENDENCE IN ABSTRACT,
OF COURSE, IS NOT THE ISSUE. THE MATTER WHICH MUST
CONCERN US POLICY IS HOW THIS SUPPORT IS MANIFESTED IN
PRACTICE - FOR EXAMPLE, IN INTERNATIONAL BODIES SUCH AS
UN AND NAM AND, BILATERALLY, IN TERMS OF CUBAN FINANCIAL
OR WEAPONS SUPPORT FOR PUERTO RICAN INDEPENDENCE ADVOCATES.

5. AS WE OUTLINED IN REF C, WHILE WE SEE SOME INCENTIVES FOR CUBAN MODERATION ON PUERTO RICO AT UN, THERE ARE MORE POWERFUL FACTORS THAT WILL PUSH CUBANS TO CONTINUE TO BACK PUERTO RICAN INDEPENDENCE VOCIFEROUSLY. THIS IS ESPECIALLY LIKELY IF PUERTO RICANS THEMSELVES PLAY ACTIVE ROLE IN NEW YORK AGAIN THIS YEAR. THUS, OUR APPEAL FOR CUBAN PASSIVE ACCEPTANCE, IF NOT SUPPORT, OF DEFERRAL OF COMMITTEE OF 24 DISCUSSION (REF D) WILL PROBABLY NOT BE SUCCESSFUL.

6. IF IT PROVES IMPOSSIBLE TO DEFER COMMITTEE OF 24 DISCUSSION TO NEXT YEAR, ESSENCE OF US PROBLEM WILL BE EITHER TO COAX CUBANS INTO CONSENSUS ON PUERTO RICO OR TO CREATE A RESOLUTION WITH BROAD ENOUGH SUPPORT TO LEAVE CUBA IN ISOLATED, EXTREMIST POSITION.

7. TO ACHIEVE CUBAN ACQUIESCENCE, WE BELIEVE THAT COMMITTEE OF 24 RESOLUTION WOULD HAVE TO BE DESIGNED THAT WOULD:
A) ENDORSE PRESIDENT CARTER'S EXPRESSION OF WILLINGNESS TO SUPPORT ANY STATUS CHOSEN BY PUERTO RICAN PEOPLE, INCLUDING INDEPENDENCE; (COMMENT: CUBANS ARE VERY RELUCTANT NOW TO CRITICIZE PRESIDENT CARTER PERSONALLY.) (B) ENDORSE REFERENDUM FOR PUERTO RICAN PEOPLE, AS SUGGESTED BY GOVERNOR ROMERO BARCELO (BUT PROBABLY WITH CONCRETE TIME FRAME STATED), AND (C) CONDEMN USE OR ENCOURAGEMENT OF ARBITRARY MEASURES, FORCE, OR TERRORISM BY ANY PARTY AS
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CONTRARY TO RIGHT OF PUERTO RICAN PEOPLE TO EXERCISE SELF-DETERMINATION. (COMMENT: CUBANS THEMSELVES HAVE DENIED SUPPORT FOR PUERTO RICAN TERRORISM.)

8. IF A RESOLUTION WERE FRAMED ALONG THESE LINES AND A PERSONAL MESSAGE ASKING FOR SUPPORT WERE SENT TO CUBANS (PRESUMABLY TO MALMIERCA OR CASTRO) BY SECRETARY VANCE OR AMBASSADOR YOUNG, COUPLED WITH DIRE WARNING OF POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES WITHIN US OR CUBAN OPPOSITION, IT IS POSSIBLE CUBANS WOULD VOTE FOR, OR ABSTAIN ON SUCH A RESOLUTION. DEPARTMENT SHOULD NOTE THAT AT HAVANA NAM COORDINATING BUREAU MEETING, INITIAL CUBAN DRAFT (WHICH EVENTUALLY WAS APPROVED BY BUREAU) CALLED ONLY FOR SUPPORT OF "RIGHT" OF PUERTO RICAN PEOPLE TO SELF-DETERMINATION AND INDEPENDENCE, NOT SUPPORT FOR PUERTO RICAN INDEPENDENCE PER SE. STRONGER AMENDED CUBAN LANGUAGE, LATER INTRODUCED AT BEHEST OF PUERTO RICAN PSP, WHICH VERY SIGNIFICANTLY DID NOT PROSPER, ADDED FOLLOWING ELEMENTS: (A) CONDEMNATION OF PUERTO RICO AS "COLONIAL CASE", (B) CONDEMNATION OF US "ANNEXATIONIST MANEUVERS", AND (C) CALL ON COMMITTEE OF 24 TO TAKE MEASURES FOR PROMPT DECOLONIZATION. (SEE HAVANA 1413.)

9. A FURTHER CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE BORNE IN MIND. IF
A RESOLUTION ALONG LINES SUGGESTED IN PARA 7 WERE ADOPTED,
IT WOULD SIGNIFICANTLY RESTRICT CUBAN FREEDOM OF ACTION
ON PUERTO RICO ISSUE BOTH IN OTHER INTERNATIONAL BODIES
(SUCH AS NAM) AND VIS-A-VIS PUERTO RICAN INDEPENDENCE
ADVOCATES.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INDEPENDENCE, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978HAVANA02003
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780288-0403
Format: TEL
From: HAVANA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780765/aaaaccwk.tel
Line Count: 123
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 405dda75-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 STATE 166231, 78 HAVANA 1819, 78 HAVANA 1684
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 11 jul 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2024450
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CUBAN POSITION ON PUERTO RICO
TAGS: PDEV, PORG, CU, RQ, US, UNGA
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/405dda75-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014